



Manchester LINK

ISSUE 3

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2008

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Manchester's Big Tent Event!



You can find out about the work of the LINK and how to get involved, plus a range of other activities

There'll be workshops on how you can get involved in shaping the future of the health and social care services you receive and make a difference and a range of ways for you to give us your views - including comments cards, surveys and a 'vox box' (a big brother style diary room where you can leave video comments).

On Tuesday 7th October Manchester LINK will be coming to YOU!

Our launch event was way back in June and I'm sure you are wondering what we have been upto since then. Well, quite a lot actually and we want to come and tell you all about it!

The Manchester LINK Big Tent will be in Piccadilly Gardens from 11am - 3pm on Tuesday 7th October and along with a number of workshops and updates on the work the LINK has been carrying out, we'll have loads of interactive stalls from local health organisations and groups giving you BMI checks, blood pressure tests and advice on healthy eating and exercise, to name just a few.

The central focus of the event will be a Health Question Time - a panel of local health experts from your hospitals, GP practices and primary care providers who will answer questions from the audience about local health issues such as not being able to find a GP or a dentist, or having to wait too long for a hospital appointment. YOU get to ask the questions!

If you want to come along you can simply turn up on the day, however it would be helpful if you could contact us in advance so we know how much food to provide! You can e-mail using the details on the back. We will also have space for some stalls, if your organisation would like one, contact us for more information.

Rating your local health services

The Healthcare Commission carries out an annual health check on every local health trust which assesses it against a set of criteria such as cleanliness and patient focus. Comments are invited from LINKs but this year they also want to hear from voluntary organisations. If you would like to make a comment come along to our info session on 8th September at 11:30 in Cross Street Chapel. E-mail us to register.



Existing surgeries like The Docs in the city centre won't be affected

Christie Hospital will be holding its AGM on 16th September at Manchester Town Hall, from 1pm-3pm. Members of the public are welcome to attend

Practices have been told they must offer appointments with doctors during extended opening hours

Manchester to get new GP surgeries

Under a £250m Government plan to increase access to GPs in under-doctored areas, Manchester will get 3 new GP surgeries and a new GP-led health centre in the city centre.

The surgeries, in Levenshulme, Longsight and Moston, will start with zero lists and will open up appointments to thousands of new patients currently unable to access a GP.

The new surgeries will operate with extended opening hours - with appointments available on

Saturdays and in the evenings on some week nights and the GP-led health centre to be located somewhere in the city centre will be open 12 hours a day, 7 days a week and may include a range of health services as well as appointments with GPs and a Walk-in facility.

All of these are *additional* services and no existing facilities will be replaced. The PCT are currently looking for suitable premises and providers for the services and it is hoped that all will be open to patients in April 2009.

Christie's in running for best hospital in the country

Christie Hospital, the region's specialist cancer centre in Withington, is in the running for best hospital in the country in the awards run by the trade magazine Health Service Journal (HSJ).

The Christie has been praised for its innovative plans to develop two new £17m radiotherapy centres in Oldham and Salford,

closer to patients and a new £35m treatment centre at the Christie site, which will include the largest early clinical trials unit in the world.

Trust Chief Executive Caroline Shaw said: "Being shortlisted is a fantastic stamp of approval for our hospital. We've achieved so much this year, particularly with devel-

oping our ambitious plans to take cancer services forward for our patients."

Salford Royal Hospital is also in the running for the prestigious award.

Judges will visit the finalists before announcing their decision in December.

(MEN, 25th August)

Surgeries paid to stay open have to offer doctors

Surgeries across Greater Manchester will get up to £18,000 per year to stay open later and at weekends in a government drive to improve accessibility. However, it was revealed that many

have used nurses to cover appointments during the extended hours or sent patients elsewhere.

New rules have now been put in place to stop practices doing

this and the 65 affected surgeries in Stockport, Rochdale and Manchester now have to offer appointments with a doctor out of hours.

(MEN 13th August)

Completing the transition

Since April 2008 the LINK has been run by a self appointed board which was necessary in order for decisions to be made and some work to begin. However, this was only ever a transitional arrangement and in October the board will stand down and hand over the reigns to a new, elected board.

Details are still being finalised but the board will be made up of elected individuals, organisations and community groups reflecting the diversity of the city of Manchester.

If you think you have what it takes to be a member of the board of Manchester LINK, we want to hear from you! You need to be able to commit to 3-4 hours per week and attend monthly meetings.

The board will lead on the work of the LINK and it is vital that the board is truly representative of the population so applications from minority groups are particularly encouraged.

Interested? Then send us no more than one side of a4 telling us about you, your skills and experience and what you think you can bring to the LINK. E-mail manchesterlink@blackhealthagency.org.uk.

LINK Update

We reported in the last issue that a number of working groups had been established based on areas where problems were identified at our launch event in June. These groups are now hard at work getting people involved and planning future activity.

Access to Services

Over 20 people attended the first meeting of the Access to Services Working Group, representing a range of diverse organisations and communities. The group has agreed to carry out a piece of work on GP access and will initially be looking at barriers to access - such as physical barriers, transport issues and discrimination by providers. The group will be meeting again on 3rd September and we will give you a further update in the next issue.

Older People

The Older People's group will look specifically at issues affecting older people and met for the first time in August to discuss key issues. Another meeting has been scheduled for 11th September, 1:30-3:30 at Cross Street Chapel.

Contact lydia@blackhealthagency.org.uk to get involved or find out more.

Mental Health

Manchester Mental Health Watchdog has held a number of meetings since its inception and have planned some work around the following issues:

- Crisis resolution and pearl services - what criteria do the crisis resolution teams use to decide where a crisis exists and what is the response
- Individual budgets - what criteria is used for assessing applications and how can information be better conveyed to users
- Mental health day services - what consultations are being carried out, what discussions are being held and how can service users get involved in these discussions
- Continuation of advocacy - what, if any, advocacy is being carried out upon discharge and who can access it

The group are holding their next meetings on 2nd September and 21st October and will be holding a special meeting to look at the issue of individual budgets on 15th September. E-mail Anthony on doggett@blackhealthagency.org.uk for more information.

To find out more about any of the LINK working groups or to get involved, contact us using the details on the back page

A democratically accountable NHS?



“The NHS of the future will be one of patient power, patients engaged and taking greater control over their own health and their healthcare too.”
Gordon Brown

Involving people in their own health needs to happen at a number of levels if it is to be effective:

Individual clinical decisions

Most of us want to be involved in decisions about our own care, and we may need information and assistance to help do this effectively. The culture of medicine has changed immensely and most clinicians want to see patients actively participating in decision making. Information technology can help a lot. We can all see our own medical records easily if they are in electronic form, and they can be linked to systems to show what they mean. The internet means that most of us can find out what we need to know to make sense of technical information. What we need to do is to extend these approaches so they are available to everyone, especially those who don't have a computer at home - perhaps we should be giving patients access to the internet on NHS premises.

Individual Service Providers

GP surgeries, clinics and hospitals vary in their approach to involving patients in decision making. Some practices have active patient participation groups. Some Foundation Hospitals make real use of their members and governors to inform their decision making. Others claim to do these things but actually take little notice of what their patients say. Some

encourage patients to complain and learn from the complaints. Others just go through the motions. Although there is pressure from regulators to take patient involvement seriously it is very difficult to tell from outside

It is difficult to tell from the outside whether people are genuinely involved

whether people are genuinely involved, and whether the involvement is just of selected people who won't cause any trouble. What will make a difference here is giving patients real choice, so that organisations

not involving patients will find them choosing to go elsewhere. But only around 15% of patients - those awaiting planned surgery - are offered any choice at present. Maternity and mental health services - two areas where many patients do want a choice - are excluded from the patient choice scheme. Individual choice has little to offer to people who are acutely ill or have long term medical conditions if the only choice is to get treatment from another provider further from home. And there is a fundamental tension between equity and choice: those most able to exercise choice to their advantage are likely to be the educated, articulate, assertive and influential (in other words, those least likely to have care needs). Their exercising of choice can be at the expense of those with less power and influence. Choice can actually increase inequalities in access to healthcare and in health outcomes

Commissioning

Decisions about what and how services are provided for a local community are made in England by the Primary Care Trust. Most PCTs have been reorganised several times in the last 10 years, and their relationship with their local communities is weak. Board members are appointed by the Appointments Commission which typically looks for senior level commercial experience; bringing strategic planning, financial, risk and performance management expertise gained in the private sector. It is not clear why this sort of expertise is required from non-executives rather than among the paid staff. The PCT Board is accountable to the Secretary of State, not to the local community. As PCTs shed their responsibilities for providing services in order to focus on commissioning this becomes more of a problem. Although there are technical and clinical issues in commissioning services there is also a fundamental need to relate to local communities and to be involved in political judgements.

At present PCTs do not have the capacity to respond to local communities because of the pressure of performance management from above. Local Involvement Networks have been set up to perform this function but may struggle to attract management attention. There is a lot of rhetoric about involving communities in decisions about their own health and care but little action. Most PCTs are politically invisible. As the Local Government Association Commission argues: For local accountability to be effective, the people who run health services should be obliged to explain and justify their decisions publicly; the local population (or their representatives) should have the right to interrogate health service managers about those decisions; and there should be a formal process whereby the local population (or their representatives) can pass judgement, and possibly impose sanctions, on those it decides have under performed. Community development is a technique that can

*The people
who run health
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justify their
decisions
publicly*

enhance social capital, social networks and improve a sense of control. It is a standard approach in local authorities and now needs to be applied systematically to health. It would encourage a holistic approach to health at a local level and will enable closer working between PCTs and Local Authorities. In our view there is much to be said for bringing the commissioning responsibilities of PCTs closer to the responsibilities of local government, and we suggest that this process should start by passing the responsibility for appointing non-executives from PCT Boards to local authorities.

Regional responsibilities

The regional Strategic Health Authorities are responsible for many key decisions but are even more invisible than PCTs and even less accountable. In our view their responsibilities would be appropriately located in a regional tier of government. Until that happens we suggest that as a matter of urgency regional Local Involvement Networks should be established, with local authority involvement with a remit to scrutinise local community involvement processes.

National Responsibilities

One reason for the weakness of local involvement in health services is the understandable desire by ministers to preserve the National element in the National Health Service and in particular the idea that the NHS should provide a comprehensive service available to all. This concept will come under increasing pressure as medical science and life expectancy advance. There is already plenty of evidence that comprehensiveness is only an aspiration when it comes to the most disadvantaged - travellers, drug addicts and asylum seekers. In our view this aspiration can only be realised with more significant levels of local accountability.

Martin Rathfelder

Martin is Director of the Socialist Health Association. The SHA exists to promote health and wellbeing, social justice and the eradication of inequalities through the application of socialist principles to society and government. You can find out more information about the SHA by visiting their website - www.sochealth.co.uk.

Doctors 'miss early HIV symptoms'



Symptoms can be missed by GPs

HIV is being spread because doctors overlook symptoms which could reveal the infection, according to the National Aids Trust.

The NAT said that as many as half of all early-stage infections, which are often marked by severe flu-like symptoms, are being missed.

Spotting them and carrying out an HIV test would prevent further infections.

There are approximately 7,000 new HIV infections every year in the UK and almost 50% are estimated to be passed on by people who are in the early stages of their own infection.

In the first few weeks *(BBC News, 22nd July)*

after infection there are massive levels of the virus in the blood and in most cases this causes symptoms such as sore throats, fever and rashes. NAT says that people visiting their GP or A&E with these symptoms are often told they have a minor viral infection and dismissed.

People with learning disabilities still receive unequal treatment, despite new laws to protect them

People with learning disabilities let down by NHS

An independent inquiry into access to healthcare for people with learning disabilities has published its findings and its recommendations have been welcomed by the NHS Confederation.

Healthcare for All says people with learning disabilities have higher levels of unmet need and receive less effective treatment, despite the Disability Discrimination Act and Mental Capacity Act setting out a clear legal framework for the delivery of equal treatment.

For more information go to www.iahpld.org.uk.



NHS launches online pregnancy care planner

The NHS's first online maternity guide offering information on pregnancy and birth has been launched.

The pregnancy care planner is designed to provide advice on all

aspects of pregnancy and comparative guides on what is on offer at local maternity units, along with details about how to contact a midwife.

Visit www.nhs.uk for more info.



GPs demand right to treat refugees

Government plans to deny failed asylum seekers access to free GP care breach medical ethics and could be illegal, according to evidence that the Department of Health has repeatedly refused to publish.

Doctors from the Global Health Advocacy Project (GHAP) campaign filed a freedom of information request to see the responses the DoH received from expert bodies to its con-

sultation on the proposals when it published them four years ago. The request was denied but a list of the respondents was produced and 38 of these gave copies of their submissions to the campaigners. Of these, only five backed the proposals.

Campaigners say the proposals would breach ethical guidelines laid out by the General Medical Council and that the plans could trigger outbreaks of TB, measles

and other diseases if foreign nationals could not receive routine vaccinations on the NHS.

GHAP say that it appears opposition to the scheme is 'overwhelming'. The doctors' report concludes that healthcare 'should not be used as a means of enforcing immigration policy' and that refused asylum seekers should be exempt from the plan.

(The Guardian, 3rd August)

More women to get cancer jab

All woman aged upto 24 could be offered a vaccine against one of the most common causes of cervical cancer in an extension to a multi-million pound immunisation programme.

Experts from the DoH are considering the case for offering women the latest protection against

the human papilloma virus (HPV) as part of a concerted assault on a cancer that affects 2,700 people every year.

Health chiefs are set to begin vaccinating school girls aged 12 to 13 from September in a move that the Government say could save 400 lives per year. Health Minister

Dawn Primarolo plans to extend the campaign to over 300,000 girls between 17 and 18 who would have missed out and has confirmed that the Government is looking into extending the plans to cover over one million women between the ages of 19 and 24.

(The Independent, 24th August)

Government plans go against the advice of experts who say a wider scheme is not cost effective

Call for improved acute mental health services

National quality standards should be introduced for mental health services in emergency departments and acute wards, the Academy of Royal Colleges has said.

The call follows the publication of a report which has found dramatic variation in provision between hospitals.

The report says that "their has been no incentive to commission or develop services in these areas, as it does not feature on the 'must do' agenda".

It goes on to say that "the services that do exist have been under considerable threat during times of recent change in the NHS".





Dates for your Diary

Open Day at Wythenshawe Hospital, 28th September

Whether you are thinking of a career in the NHS or you are just interested in going behind the scenes in one of the UK's top NHS Trusts, don't miss our annual open day!

There will be advice sessions from health professionals, health MOTs, tours of fascinating areas of the hospital including demonstrations

in the operating theatre and a chance to put your questions direct to the Chief Executive and Chair of the Trust.

The day is completely free and open to all. It will be held in a marquee outside Nightingale Centre on Main Hospital Road.

The event will run from 11am - 4pm. Please call 0161 291 5671 for more information.

Got an event you
want to promote?

Send us details on
[Kevin@blackhealth
agency.org.uk](mailto:Kevin@blackhealthagency.org.uk)

Focus Group at Manchester Carers Forum

Manchester Carers Forum have been asked to gauge the opinions of carers about a new DVD that is available. Manchester City Council's Carers Strategy Team have asked M.C.F. to find out your opinions on how useful you think the DVD is to your role as a carer. Your views will be taken on board by the Carers Strategy Team in deciding how useful it would be to make this DVD more readily available.

We are holding this event at our new offices in the Swan Buildings:

Monday 22 September 2008

10.30 am - 12.30 pm (lunch provided after group!)

(the DVD lasts for just over an hour and there will be a questionnaire/discussion in the second hour)

If you would like to book onto this event please phone:

(0161) 819 2226

Or e-mail rick@manchestercarersforum.org.uk or

nat@manchestercarersforum.org.uk



If you are looking after a relative or friend at home –
you are a carer!

The DVD 'Do you care?' gives immediate delivery of a simple, easily understood and comprehensive guide on how a number of caring tasks may be completed by an able bodied person. The DVD can also be shown to relatives or friends who may be able to assist you in your caring role. This will improve their skills, give them a better understanding of your circumstances and may encourage them to help.

Community Consultations

Review of Older People's Mental Health Services

Manchester's Mental Health Joint Commissioning Team is keen to find out more about the existing mental health services for older people in Manchester, how they are working and what gaps there are when it comes to mental health services for older people being provided in the city.

We already have some ideas about what might be needed, but we need to hear from those people who have first hand experience of mental health services to tell us

what's really happening and what is needed.

An independent research company called Cordis Bright has been commissioned to conduct the review and over the next few weeks they will be carrying out questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. If you are interested in getting involved in this very important work, please contact Lucy Asquith at Cordis Bright on 020 7330 9172 or by email at lucyasquith@cordisbright.co.uk for more details.



We want to hear your first hand experiences about services

Department of Health launches consultation on NHS constitution

The National Health Service

Constitution

A draft for consultation, July 2008

The Department of Health has formally launched the constitutional advisory forum, which will lead the consultation on the proposed NHS constitution.

The body includes representatives from the health service, local government, the third sector and other organisations and is jointly chaired by health minister Ivan Lewis and NHS Chief Executive David Nicholson.

The proposed NHS Constitution is about safeguarding its core principles and values for the next generation, whilst setting a clear direction for the future. It reaffirms rights to NHS services, free of charge and with equal

access for all, and it enshrines patient rights to choice and to NICE approved drugs recommended by clinicians.

It aims to empower both staff and patients, containing clear pledges on the ways in which the NHS will strive to go beyond the stated rights to improve the working environment. It has been developed from the bottom up, with the active engagement of staff, patients and the public.

The Department of Health is consulting widely on its contents and how to put it into practice. There will be stakeholder events (for organisations only) in London and Leeds in September. The consultation is open until 17th October 2008.

You can download the consultation on the DoH website at www.dh.gov.uk.

Manchester PCT will be holding a consultation event for the public about the NHS Constitution on Wednesday 3rd September from 4:45pm at the Lesbian & Gay Foundation, 105-107 Princess St, M1 6DD

Community News

Health & cancer information at North City Library

North City Library is a one-stop shop for local residents providing both local health information and details on national services.

Building on the Health Information Point, there is now a new Macmillan Information and Support Service available at the Library.

The Macmillan Information Team can answer general questions about cancer and how to protect yourself and you can find info about all aspects of cancer and healthy living.

Confidential appointments can also be organised and other services, such as; short term support; someone to talk to; signposting other organisations and services; access to IT resources.

Information at the library includes books, leaflets, fact sheets and face-to-face information. Call 227 3727 or e-mail macmillan@manchester.gov.uk.

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**

A survey by Macmillan has found that nearly half of cancer patients in England are being forced to cut back on basic needs such as food or heating in order to pay for prescription charges.

Macmillan is campaigning to make prescriptions free in England.

Help us end prescription charges

Macmillan Cancer Support believes prescription charges are a tax on illness and should be abolished.

Why should cancer patients in England pay for their prescriptions when others don't?

Why should cancer patients be forced to choose between medicines because they can't afford to pay?

You can help change this

Please join our campaign at www.macmillan.org.uk/campaigns and use our template to email your MP and local paper. Help us persuade the Government in England to abolish this tax on illness.

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**



A transport revolution for Greater Manchester



The Department for Transport has approved proposals made under the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) for a massive investment in public transport in Greater Manchester, funded in part by a Government grant and the income from a weekday, peak-time only congestion charge for people driving IN to Manchester city centre in the morning and OUT of the city centre in the evening.

The charge will only be introduced when at least 80% of the transport improvements are in operation – around 2013 at the earliest.

There are many benefits to the scheme, including major extensions to the Metrolink system, more and better designed bus routes, more trains at peak times and more cycle lanes, to name just a few.

A formal consultation on the proposals is now underway and every comment received will inform the final content of the scheme. A Greater Manchester wide referendum will be held towards the end of 2008 once the consultation is finished.

You should have received a copy of the consultation pack through your door, but you can also submit your views online at: www.gmfuturetransport.co.uk, where you can also find detailed information about the proposals and what they will mean for you.

Transport impacts on health and poor public transport and congested roads means worse health for the people of Manchester, take 5 minutes to give your views on this scheme.

www.gmfuturetransport.co.uk.

A pollution solution

Our plans would fund a number of initiatives that would improve air quality inside the charging area.

Cars release harmful air pollutants that affect people's health, causing respiratory complaints.

Our plans could help reduce the number of pollutants and improve air quality.

More trams, powered by carbon-free hydro-electricity, would run to more destinations. Extra carriages on trains would carry more people. Plus more cycle lanes would be developed, filling gaps in the current network.

Within the charging rings, emissions of local air pollutants in areas that currently have the worst air pollution will drop by up to 12%.

Want us to publish

details of a service

you run or a

consultation your

organisation is

carrying out?

E-mail us on

Kevin@blackhealth

agency.org.uk

Open Up - project support

Do you have a great idea about how to challenge mental health discrimination in your local area?

Open Up is offering a programme of project support to people with experience of mental health distress who want to challenge negative attitudes about mental health in their local area. Your project could be anything from an awareness raising drama to a media campaign to a website - if it's innovative and dynamic; Open Up want to hear from you!

The programme provides:

Mentoring

One to one support from an expert team of co-ordinators.

Training

Workshops to explore issues of discrimination, to further develop your ideas and to gain specialist skills relevant to your project.

Help with expenses

You can get upto £5,000 to help put your plans into action.

To get in touch with your local co-ordinator, call 020 7700 8171 or e-mail open.up@mhmedia.com.



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Your Local Involvement Network is your independent monitor of local health and social care services - Providing a voice for service users and enabling you to shape the future of the services you receive.

Your LINK Team is:

Karen Tucker - LINK Manager

Kevin Peel - LINK Development Worker

Lydia Hurford - LINK Development Worker

Anthony Doggett - LINK Administrator

Danny Gough - LINK Administrator

Visit the Manchester LINK website:
www.manchesterlink.co.uk

LINK Radio!

Manchester LINK has its own radio show!

The show is your opportunity to have your say about local health and social care services. Got an event you want to advertise, a consultation that you want people to know about, a service to promote, a group people might want to get involved in or just want to make a comment about local services? Get in touch and we can arrange a slot for you to discuss it on the show.

The show is broadcast on ALL FM 96.9 on the third Monday of every month from 2pm-3pm and you can also listen online at: www.allfm.org.



Get in touch if you want us to broadcast something or you'd like to come in and discuss an issue

Dates of upcoming shows:

Monday 15th September

Monday 20th October

Monday 17th November

Deadlines for recording are 1 week before so bear this in mind when thinking about coming on the show.

Interested? Give Kevin a call on 0161 214 3982 or e-mail him at:

kevin@blackhealthagency.org.uk